

NOTE ON *STIGMODERA VIRIDICAUDA* CARTER.

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(Two Text-figures.)

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Sometime in 1910, the authorities of the Natural History Museum of Stockholm sent two members of their staff to Australia to study the remarkable flora and fauna and to obtain for their Museum specimens of scientific interest. During their stay of two years they collected a large number of specimens in the six Australian States, especially in Queensland and Western Australia. A few years later, the Directors of the Stockholm Museum sent all the insects of the Buprestidae family collected by their entomologists for examination by Mr. H. J. Carter, the leading Australian specialist in that family of beetles. Carter decided that a fairly large *Stigmodera* of the *Themognatha*



1. *Stigmodera viridicauda* Carter. 2. *Stigmodera lobicollis* Saunders.

subgenus from Yarrabah (a few miles south of Cairns) was new and described it as *S. viridicauda* Carter (*Arch. fur Zool.*, 120: 3) and returned the holotype, a ♂, to the Stockholm Museum. A few years later, I found reason to question the accuracy of Carter's identification, especially after reading the following lines which he wrote in 1931 in his "Notes on the Genus *Stigmodera*" (*Aust. Zoologist*, 6: 338-339): "I now think it probable that *viridicauda* Cart. is a form of *jansoni*." The unique type is in Stockholm Museum. Further on (p. 339) he added that *viridicauda* "may prove to be a variety of *jansoni* Saund., the distinction of which from *donovani* was at the time not clear to me". Those lines clearly disclose a state of perplexity in Mr. Carter's mind, which is surprising since his *viridicauda* actually is *Stig. lobicollis* described and named by Saunders (*Journ. Linn. Soc. Lond.*, 1868: 462).

It is a remarkable coincidence that Saunders should describe in the same paper and on the same date both *Stig. lobicollis* (= *viridicauda* Cart.) and *Stig. jansoni*. Saunders did not fail to see that these two species belong to different types of *Stigmodera*.

A glance at extracts of his descriptions of those two insects is most instructive:

*lobicollis*: Head and thorax green, the latter with its lateral margins ochreous-red;

*jansoni*: Head and thorax brassy-green, lateral margins of latter testaceous.

These few lines definitely show that Saunders considered them as clearly different from one another.

Carter himself, in his own description of *Stig. viridicauda* Cart., in 1920 calls it a species near *affinis* Snd., *sanguinea* Snd., and *viridicincta* Waterh. That is correct, but to suggest that *viridicauda* might prove to be a variety of *Stig. jansoni* is wrong because, if the three species mentioned above unquestionably have their heads and thoraces metallic-green with the margins of their prothorax sanguineous-red exactly like *lobicollis*, the same cannot be said of *Stig. jansoni* whose lateral thoracical margins are testaceous or yellow-brown.

How is it that Carter failed to mention in his paper that *Stig. lobicollis* was also like the three above-named? The most reasonable suggestion is that, in my opinion, he did not have at that time any example of *lobicollis* in his own collection and that consequently that insect was unfamiliar to him.

While in Europe, I had an excellent opportunity to solve the *viridicauda* problem. The Stockholm Museum authorities very kindly gave me all facilities to examine at leisure the "holotype". For that gesture I wish to express to them my gratitude. It did not take long to compare *S. viridicauda* with the examples of *lobicollis* in my own collection and to ascertain that the "rara avis" in front of me was no other than *Stig. lobicollis* described by Saunders (*Journ. Linn. Soc. Lond.*, 1868: 462). The two photographs illustrating this paper show fairly clearly that *lobicollis* and *viridicauda* are the same insect, although it will be noticed that the Stockholm example (No. 1) is slightly damaged (thorax in two places) while mine (No. 2) is in perfect condition. Carter's *Stig. viridicauda*, being a misidentified insect, should now be erased from the index list of Australian Stigmoderae.

The Buprestidae dealt with in this paper could be ranged into two groups of clearly different and easily distinguishable colour characteristics:

Group A of *lobicollis* pattern and Group B of *jansoni* pattern.

Here is an explanatory list limited to five names only of five species belonging to each group:

Group A: *S. lobicollis* Snd., *S. donovani* L. & G., *S. affinis* Snd., *S. limbata* Don., and *S. sanguinea* Snd.

Group B: *S. jansoni* Snd., *S. excisicollis* Macl., *S. sanguineocincta* Snd., *S. gemmelli* Deuq., and *S. franca* Cart.

Only the species in Group A have the lateral thoracical margin ochreous-red.

*Stigmodera lobicollis* may be regarded in these days as a rare insect, rarity due to destruction of forests and of the indigenous vegetation in all parts of Australia. It was occasionally seen, some forty years ago, in the Northern Rivers district of New South Wales (Grafton and Lismore district), but appears to be now almost entirely confined to Queensland. The ♀ is of darker brownish colour than the ♂. There is still quite a good deal of interesting work to be done before the Queensland Stigmoderae family is perfectly classified.